The Cornell High School Key Club had a memorable learning experience this winter when they traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the Wreaths Across America event held at Arlington National Cemetery. Key Club members, along with sponsor, Mrs. Miriam Klein, and social studies teacher, Mrs. Megan Fuga, left on December 15, arriving in time to take a tour of the nation’s capital. Key Club students visited and experienced the powerful exhibits at the National Holocaust Museum, the World War II Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, and National Mall Area. They also explored the United States Capitol Building. The night concluded by seeing the National Christmas Tree and Menorah display and taking a general auto tour of the city.

Dinner was served at Busboys and Poets, known for its atmosphere and work toward tolerance and positive social change.

The next morning the students and sponsors took the D.C. metro rail into Arlington and joined a line with thousands of other volunteers waiting to help lay wreaths at the gravesites of veterans. Once inside the cemetery, the students selected a truck and were designated to work in a specific section. Volunteers from all over the country were given wreaths to lay at the gravesites in an act of remembrance, and to thank the vets for their work and sacrifice.

The Cornell team laid approximately 50 wreaths that morning and gained a lifetime of experience that will stay with them. The students and sponsors were very grateful for the experience and look forward to carrying on the tradition for years to come.

A special thank you to the Coraopolis VFW Post 402 for their generous donation in support of this project! The Key Club members also did their own fundraising to cover the cost of this trip.
Federal Programming Update

This school year, Cornell Elementary moved from a Title I targeted school to a school-wide model providing Title I. Every Cornell Elementary student now has an opportunity to reap the benefits of specialized reading instruction throughout their school day. The schoolwide model has allowed for better and broader use of technology in the classroom, and offers a blended learning environment for students in grades K-6. This recent move in designated categories is a positive one for Cornell Elementary, and the expansion of services will benefit all students.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Association of Federal Program Coordinators hosts an annual conference called the Pennsylvania Title I Improving School Performance Conference. Each year, this statewide conference is held at the Sheraton Station Square in downtown Pittsburgh. It is comprised of working sessions, vendor displays, and small and large group presentations.

The Cornell School District was well represented at the ISP conference by having a number of faculty members selected as presenters. The first grade team of Mrs. Kelly Foster and Mrs. Robin Heigley presented on STEAM learning opportunities using literacy strategies, as well as highlighting the creation of Cornell Elementary’s Makerspace. Cornell Elementary reading specialist, Mrs. Lori Dzielski, and Director of Pupil Services, Mrs. Carla Antoniades, also presented on Title I programming strategies, specialty grouping and afterschool and summer programming.

All presentation sessions were very well attended and received. A very impressive showing for Cornell.
Becoming Google Certified

Cornell teachers have been working for the past year to earn their Google Certified Educator credentials. Through the Google Certified Educator program, teachers learn about best practices with educational technology and G-Suite, Google’s cloud computing, collaboration, and productivity software. After finishing the training, teachers complete an intense three-hour performance-based exam. Thus far the following teachers have earned their Level I certificate: Mrs. Miriam Klein, Mrs. Kristen Bardelli, Mrs. Rachel McVeagh, Mr. Andrew Erwin, Mrs. Julie Roncone, and Mrs. Megan Fuga. Congratulations to those teachers for their hard work, as well as taking on a challenge to expand on their instructional capacities.

High School Engages in the “Dynamic Learning Project”

This school year, Cornell High School was chosen as one of 50 schools across the country to participate in the Dynamic Learning Project. The goal of this project, sponsored by Google, Digital Promise and EdTech Team, is to improve educational equity and student learning by implementing instructional technology coaching.

This project created the opportunity for Cornell High School to utilize a full-time instructional technology coach who provides personalized support to assist teachers in integrating technology in the classroom in transformative ways.

Over the course of this school year, Cornell High School teachers are working with Mrs. Rachel McVeagh, a Coaching Fellow, who is helping them identify projects on how to best use technology in the classroom. With hands-on support, Cornell teachers have been implementing innovative strategies to better support our students’ learning, as well as strategies to improve their own professional practice.

Participating in the Dynamic Learning Project has brought several additional learning opportunities to Cornell, such as:

- Hour of Code activities facilitated by Googlers
- Augmented Reality (AR) Expeditions Pioneer Program (upcoming)
- Creation of the Student Tech Team
- Recognition of two Innovation Advocates (Mr. Larry DiSilvestro and Mrs. Miriam Klein)
- Access to Dynamic Learning Project staff (for teachers and students) with extra professional development opportunities for teachers on-site, online, and at Google offices.

Cornell is very proud to be selected as one of the Dynamic Learning Project’s 50 schools. Training occurred over the summer months at Google headquarters in Mountain View, California. Mrs. McVeagh and high school principal, Mr. Doug Szokoly, attended the week-long training which provided a great foundation for the project.

A recent winter institute was held in the Pittsburgh region where Mrs. McVeagh and Mr. Szokoly were able to present on the progress of the project at Cornell High School.

It has been an exciting first semester as teachers have been incorporating tech-based strategies that are helping our students’ knowledge grow.
Teachers Represent District at Tech Conference

For the second year in a row, Cornell had a great showing at the Three Rivers Educational Technology Conference (TRETC). TRETC is a regional educational technology conference sponsored by the Pittsburgh Technology Council.

Mrs. Rachel McVeagh, who is taking on the role of instructional coach this year through the Dynamic Learning Project, had a packed session for the third year in a row. Her presentation, “Classroom Innovation: New and Better,” was extremely well attended and received by area educators.

Cornell High School social studies teacher and social studies department chair, Mrs. Amy Palo, and Cornell librarian, Mrs. Miriam Klein, teamed up to share resources they have been part of from their collective work. Their presentation, “Digital Humanities,” was an outstanding overview of those projects and was well received by attendees.

Cornell High School science teacher, Mrs. Susan Dunning, along with Mrs. Miriam Klein, brought their Games for Change Champion girls to share their work in a poster session.

Finally, students from Cornell High School science teacher Mr. Tavis Bogue’s advanced science class shared their chain reaction contraption as part of the student showcase. Mr. Bogue’s students were also interviewed by SLB Radio’s Youth Express.

TRETC was a great opportunity for Cornell teachers to learn and share best practice with local educators. It also allowed Cornell the opportunity to highlight all the great work that faculty and students are engaged with on a daily basis.

Virtual Reality Now at Cornell

Cornell High School science teacher, Mrs. Dunning, and social studies teacher, Mrs. Fuga’s seventh-grade science and social studies classes learned about biomes in a new and unique way this year. Graduate students from Carnegie Mellon University’s Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) are working with Mrs. Dunning, Mrs. Fuga, and their students to develop an immersive virtual reality experience for students to learn about deciduous forests of North America. What is really unique about this experience is that the students and teachers can interact with one another and see each other’s avatars while in the virtual environment.

The project was hugely successful and was reported on in The Hechinger Report in January. The article in The Hechinger Report can be found online on the district’s website. The article does an outstanding job highlighting the overall project, as well as how a virtual reality experience can deepen the learning experience of students.

Virtual reality may become a more common experience for students as technology continues to progress, and Cornell is excited to be one of the first in the area experimenting with such technology and learning experiences.

CONGRATULATIONS, MR. JACKSON!

The Cornell School District would like to wish Mr. Keith Jackson best of luck on his recent retirement. Mr. Jackson has worked in the maintenance and custodial department at Cornell for the past 27 years.

Mr. Jackson also had four children attend and graduate from Cornell High School.

Mr. Jackson is a true supporter and fan of Cornell, and is a prominent fixture at all Cornell football and basketball events, as well as other community events in Coraopolis.

The Cornell School District would like to thank Mr. Jackson for all of the support and dedication he has shown the district over his career. Thank you Mr. Jackson for your service and best of luck as you begin your well-deserved retirement.

Find upcoming activities, news and more at: www.cornellsd.org
PBL is an acronym used in the field of education that stands for Project-Based Learning. At Cornell Elementary, PBL is infused into our everyday curriculum. This allows Cornell students to complete hands-on, challenging, and engaging learning activities while interacting with high-tech and low-tech equipment.

Cornell Elementary teachers use the Cornell Makerspace to enrich their units of study while getting their students out of their desks and away from their typical classroom environment, thus encouraging student creativity and critical thinking. Project-based learning can, and should be, utilized across the curriculum as well as grade spans. It can be implemented with any subject and is a great time for students to experience new instruction and new techniques, while getting a bit messy in the process.

Over the summer months the Cornell Makerspace was given a new paint color and the theme of COLLABORATION was selected. It is a great place for both Cornell students and teachers to collaborate. Teachers document their Maker projects on a staff-shared slideshow. This slideshow allows teachers to see what other grade levels are making and learning and creating dialogues from teacher to teacher.

Thanks in large part to Robert Morris University, which coordinates the Ohio River Consortium and the Grable Foundation, this room is nearly 100% grant funded. Cornell was able to obtain new furniture for the space in the form of tables, stools and storage closets to house supplies. This allows for a tidy and safe place to work with, store, and organize materials, tools, kits, and other various supplies.

The next transformation of this space will occur in the early spring when new flooring is installed and Cornell Elementary students walk into their Makerspace with a floor design unlike any other room. A small committee of teachers were able to give input on the new look and design of the floor.

It is Cornell’s hope that this unique space can continue providing alternate learning opportunities, such as project-based learning, that allow students to develop critical skills such as collaboration, problem solving, and creativity.
Moon Rotary Honors Students

Cornell High School seniors Myka Smith and Dae-jean Collins were both awarded a full scholarship by the Moon Rotary Club to attend the RYLA 2017 Conference held at LaRoche College last June. RYLA is an international leadership program developed by Rotary International. The program is designed to demonstrate Rotary’s respect and concern for youth, provide an effective training experience, encourage leadership of youth by youth, and to recognize young people who are rendering service to their communities. The program challenges students in the areas of leadership, interpersonal skills, personal reflection and discovery. It provides a service-focused application while creating new relationships.

During the week-long conference, students attended workshops, participated in discussion groups, and completed hands-on activities. On November 21, Myka and Dae-jean attended the Moon Rotary Club meeting to share their meaningful experiences at the RYLA Conference and their appreciation for the scholarship and opportunity.

Partnering with Real World Scholars

Cornell High School has entered into a partnership with an organization called Real World Scholars to create and run an actual business within the walls of the school. Through EdCorps, Cornell High School students enrolled in Mr. Cellante’s Business Principles course and Mr. DiSilvestro’s Manufacturing Technology course are designing, developing, manufacturing, marketing, and preparing to ship their product(s) to potential customers all over the world. Currently, students are exploring products utilizing Cornell’s recently purchased laser engraving equipment located in the Tech Ed Department. The laser engraver was purchased through a separate grant funded by the Grable Foundation. Real World Scholars awarded Cornell High School a $1,000 start-up grant, which is being used to purchase equipment and inventory as students start to make prototypes of their ideas.

Mr. DiSilvestro and Mr. Cellante are advising the students as they prepare to chart the course of their business, which is tentatively called RaiderRulz. The goal of the Real World Scholars program is to create a student-led business that will continue to sustain itself year-to-year. Additional money that is profited from the Real World Scholars program will be used to purchase more equipment for this business venture, as well as possibly add more equipment in the Tech Ed Department.
Over the past few school years, Cornell School District has been working on implementing a number of writing and literacy strategies into all classrooms. Last school year a decision was made to fully implement the Collins Writing Program into as many classrooms as possible. Regular early morning meetings were scheduled with groups of teachers across grade levels and disciplines where discussions could occur on the different elements of the Collins Writing program.

The Cornell School District also invited Dr. John Collins, the designer of the writing program, to Cornell to lead teachers through two workshops on his program and also essential writing assignments that all teachers could use in their classroom.

Cornell also invited and welcomed a number of visitors from the region to see Dr. Collins in action. This school year, Dr. Collins has made two return visits to Cornell where he modeled lessons in language arts and social studies classes for both the elementary and secondary teachers.

This was an exciting opportunity for Cornell teachers to learn first-hand about the Collins Writing Program from Dr. Collins himself. This writing initiative should only expand in the years to come, and the collaboration and team approach among faculty members has really made this initiative impactful.

Congratulations to Cornell Elementary third grade teacher, Mrs. Casey Thomas, for being selected as a recipient of the Chevron Leader in the Classroom award. The Leaders in the Classroom award winners are selected from a nomination process which is submitted by area principals. Awardees are selected for their leadership they have demonstrated in the classroom and for their instructional skills with students and colleagues. Among the qualities to be selected as a Leader in the Classroom are providing engaging instruction and curriculum, encouraging lifelong learning, and inspiring passion for education beyond the classroom and into the future.

There were 16 Leaders in the Classroom award winners this fall, and all 16 winners were recognized during a Pittsburgh Steelers game when they played the New England Patriots on December 17.

Mrs. Thomas was surprised at a schoolwide pep assembly this fall when representatives from Chevron were present to make the announcement and present her with a check and balloons for the occasion. Mrs. Thomas received two complimentary tickets to the Steelers vs. Patriots game, a field pass—which she was able to use during pregame, recognition on the big screen, a custom-made Steelers jersey, and $1,000 to use in her classroom.

Mrs. Thomas plans to use her award money to purchase classroom furniture to provide flexible seating options, as well as purchasing equipment to incorporate technology in the classroom. Congratulations to Mrs. Thomas; Cornell is proud of you!
ABOVE: On October 17, interested Cornell seniors visited Penn State Beaver for Senior Pride Day. Students toured the Penn State Beaver's campus with Lion Ambassadors, attended a presentation by the Admissions Office, and participated in a Pride Challenge designed to teach students balance, leadership, time-management, and communication skills that are necessary for success in college. Cornell juniors and seniors have countless opportunities to speak with college representatives throughout the school year, as well as many college visits that are arranged. Top Row: Tori Nottingham, William Jefferson, Jennifer Sanchez, Kennedy Jackson, Patience Gipson, Hailey Leitner. Middle Row: Mrs. Dahmen, Jaelah Smith, Nysia Miles, Mrs. Walter. Bottom Row: Leanna Powers, Tazaya Short, Amira Bethel, Cy'Moni Harrison, Myka Smith, Na-Dhamah Luster, Desmond Ross, and Stefan Blackstone.